

PATENT
450117-03450**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks herewith, which place the application into condition for allowance. The present amendment is being made to facilitate prosecution of the application.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1-5, 7, 9, and 10 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 7 and 9 are independent. Claims 1-5, 7, 9, and 10 are hereby amended. Support for this amendment is provided throughout the Specification as originally filed. No new matter has been introduced. Changes to claims are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §101, §102, §103, or §112. Rather, these changes are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicants are entitled.

II. REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 1, 2, 4, and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Claims 1, 2, 4, and 7 have been amended, thereby obviating the rejection.

III. REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

Claims 1-5, 7, 9, and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,643,652 to Helgeson et al (hereinafter, merely "Helgeson").

Applicants note that Helgeson was filed on January 12, 2001, and claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application 60/176,137 filed on January 14, 2000.

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The present application has a priority date of July 5, 2000, a certified copy of European Application No. 00114425.2 having been submitted to the U.S. Patent Office on October 11, 2001. Thus Applicants are entitled to an effective filing date of July 5, 2000, which is prior to Helgeson filing date of January 12, 2001.

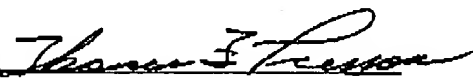
Upon review of the 60/176,137 provisional application, Applicants submit that there is no disclosure supporting the rejection. Applicants respectfully request the rejection be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Please charge any additional fees that may be needed, and credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that all of the claims in this application are patentable and Applicants respectfully request early passage to issue of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,
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